

OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

**JOYCE E. DUDLEY**  
District Attorney



DA 06-531

RELEASE NUMBER

June 6, 2019

RELEASE DATE

*Joyce E. Dudley*

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Christopher Dalbey, Deputy District Attorney

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\*\*\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

***Exxon Mobil Corporation Settles Environmental Violations with the District Attorney***

***Company Failed to Immediately Report the Release of a Hazardous Material***

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today the resolution of an environmental-protection action against Exxon Mobil Corporation, which owns and operates a petroleum processing facility in Las Flores Canyon. Exxon Mobil and the District Attorney stipulated to the entry of final judgment in this civil case filed on May 31, 2019, in the Superior Court for Santa Barbara County.

The Complaint filed by the District Attorney alleged that on March 31, 2018, approximately 420 gallons of hydrochloric acid mixture were released. Exxon Mobil immediately contacted 911, but did not immediately report the release to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services ("CalOES"), as required by the Health & Safety Code. That same day, the Santa Barbara County Certified Unified Program Agency ("CUPA"), a division of County Environmental Health Services, instructed Exxon Mobil to immediately report the release to CalOES. Although Exxon Mobil retained a third-party contractor to assist with clean-up efforts, Exxon Mobil did not report the release to CalOES until April 10, 2018. The Complaint further alleged that Exxon Mobil's failure to immediately report the release was based, in part, on a flow chart prepared by Exxon Mobil that relied on federal law to determine whether to report a release to CalOES. Federal law requires a release only if a certain quantity of a hazardous material is released. State law is stricter and requires reporting if the release poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety, property, or the environment, regardless of the quantity released.

Exxon Mobil cooperated with the District Attorney to resolve this case. Exxon Mobil will pay a total of \$6,322.50:

- \$2,000.00 in civil penalties; and
- \$4,322.50 to the CUPA as reimbursement for investigation and enforcement costs.

In addition, Exxon Mobil will be subject to an injunction, making it easier to enforce future compliance with the Health and Safety Code. The injunction requires them to comply with California hazardous-material reporting laws and to not rely on the quantity requirement of federal law when deciding whether to report a release.

District Attorney Dudley said, "The law requires immediate reporting of hazardous-material releases to both local and state authorities, for the protection of first responders, the general public, company employees and the environment. Public safety demands the enforcement of these laws." District Attorney Dudley also wanted to thank Deputy District Attorney Chris Dalbey for his tenacious preservation of our pristine environment.

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